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Last day to pay property taxes is December 31st

The Tax Bureau has issued a bulletin announcing that the last day to pay for property taxes of 2012 is December 31, 2012. Due to the fact that the bureau will be closed as of December 31st, clients are advised to make payments before this date or on the next day of work, which is January 3rd, 2013.

To avoid the automatic process of collections with all the accompanying consequences, clients are advised to take care of pending payments with due diligence.

Buddy the Cake Boss at El Gaucho Argentine Grill



Our roving photographer caught Buddy the Cake Boss at El Gaucho Argentine Grill, getting ready to enjoy sumptuous dinner and the best steaks in town.

Buddy Valastro's of the famous family bakery is a household name here. Much of that success of his reality show series is due to Buddy's charismatic character and

tremendous sense of humor.

The show airs on cable television network, TLC, and is very popular on Aruba, where everyone just loves cake!

The show, just concluded its 4th season. It follows the adventures of Buddy in his bakery, a family owned business in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Brazil names candidate to head WTO

BRASILIA (AFP) - Brazil on Friday named its World Trade Organization envoy Roberto Azevedo to succeed Pascal Lamy as head of the Geneva-based trade oversight body.

Brazil's ambassador to the WTO since 2008, Azevedo has been tackling the country's cotton subsidy dispute with the United States.

He joined eight other candidates who have thrown their hats into the ring, including South Korean Trade Minister Taeho Bark. Costa

Rica, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico and New Zealand have also put forward candidates.

"The Brazilian candidacy reflects the importance the country attaches to the strengthening of the WTO," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The WTO's 158 member nations have until Monday to present a candidate and the body's General Council will start interviewing candidates

from late January.

The General Council, the WTO's top decision-making body, will announce its choice by May 31.

Frenchman Lamy has held the post since 2005 and his term ends August 31.

Observers say the next head will most likely not be a European or an American. Three of the nine candidates are women.

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EDITORIAL

2012 is over, and we are still here

By Rosalie Klein

It is comforting to know that we will have a brief respite from an apocalyptic end of the world until 2016. There have been many who have interpreted passages from the bible to pinpoint a cataclysmic and fiery finish to the world for thousands of years, but this year, end-of-earth fanatics were pointing to a Mayan Calendar produced over five thousand years past, long before the New Testament.

There is a website, www.bible.ca, which has cataloged 242 dates when the world was supposed to end most grievously. Most predictions revolve around the idea that only a few enlightened individuals will achieve salvation, often entailing them turning over their worldly goods and fortune to the prophet of the moment, to insure their place in Paradise.

One can understand how in early times, (and we are counting many dates cited from 44 A.D through 1900s) that a public without the access to information as we have today, might believe these declarations. One does have to wonder at those who



so readily accepted those of Harold Camping in 2011, when 16 distinctly different organizations which proclaimed 2000 as the year for earth's demise, had been proved wrong. There have been 14 predictions of the "End of Days," to occur by the end of this year, simply since the advent of the 21st century, based only on biblical interpretation. It is certainly understandable why the world in general has be-

come rather blasé regarding the subject. Admittedly, it is something to keep social media buzzing and certainly, always good for a puff piece on the nightly news.

While reflecting on the triumphs and trials of the past year, one does have to wonder at the eagerness with which so many will embrace the idea that the world will end completely within a very short time. Why are these people so in love with this idea? Are they so unhappy they wish their lives to end, but don't want to face the consequences of committing suicide? The decision and whatever punishments they may face is now out of their hands and in those of the creator, because of this inevitable end, thus insuring their salvation and a better life for all eternity. Are they that unhappy with this world, that it is not enough for them to bid it good bye, but must be joined by billions of innocent people, who will suffer eternally for not believing as

they do? Sort of a global "going postal," is it not?

The next three most current predictions of the world's demise (presently on record) are for 2016, 2034 and 2047; judging from the past, we have no doubt a few more will surface in between. An article in Weekly World News describes a find by a

Professor Lloyd Cuningdale of Salt Lake City who was excavating with his students at the site of the famous Donner party disaster of 1847. The latter was a group of settlers bound for California who became trapped by snow in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Cuningdale and students have found a time capsule left by the settlers which contains many predictions for the future. They predict that nations will abandon traditional methods of conflict and resort to the use of biological warfare. In 2016, one such disease will spread and kill all of the humans on the planet.

This is very interesting, as it is hard to imagine itinerant settlers in 1847 having even the remotest concept of biological warfare, as doctors of the time didn't yet have a notion of the role of bacteria and infection. Only around 1850 researchers were starting to show proof of it with animals, but the leap of understanding had not yet been made to humans.

Continued on pg 3

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2012 is over, and we are still here

Continued from pg 2

A patient dying during surgery was common, as the medical field had little knowledge of thoroughly sterilizing their hands, environment and instruments. So it is remarkable, (and perhaps a bit suspicious) that said time capsule was truly left by the Donner group.

The last definitive date (at the moment) offered for the collapse of all we know is September 14, 2047. According to The Church of !BLAIR!: "The human race will probably be terminated at 3:28 AM (Soho, England time) The church teaches, with tongue firmly in cheek, that if the human race does

not discard their plastic conformity, then the Gods will withdraw their protection. The Gods don't want us to worship them; they don't want sacrifices or even offerings. They just want us to rid itself of our excessive "Normalcy". At that point, Astro-Lemurs (extra-terrestrials similar in shape to lemurs, but with rainbow colored bodies) will attack the entire human race and beat them to death with gigantic burritos." I am not making this up...but maybe they are in ridicule of all those who do take such prophecies seriously, particularly when those making them claim their source as the good book.

Much of this brings us to the crux of religious debate, which is always a hot topic. It is not perhaps the actual existence of a supreme being or the fact that some refute it, which creates so much dissension in the ranks, but the interpretation of the Bible that produces so many theories, as well as sects.

These continuous, definitive and bogus declarations of the apocalypse, which pro-

duce much controversy and humor, prove to be very anticlimatic. Any good scriptwriter will tell you, it results in a very unsatisfied audience and poor reviews.

The real disaster story is there, in the reports of climate change, increasingly disastrous weather, poisoning of the air, water and land, and rampant population increase that will eventually deplete the world's natural resources and food supply. For decades SF writers have been crafting theoretical dystopias that would appear to be uncomfortably accurate and prophetic.

Perhaps the wholehearted acceptance of being on the brink of the world ending gives all those who are so acceptant that relief from responsibility for the world we leave behind for succeeding generations. It is rather selfish to be convinced they will not have to suffer food shortages, or a poisoned atmosphere, ocean and food supply, because they will all be dead...so why be bothered trying to prevent it? When examined in that light, it makes sense.

"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

~ Oprah Winfrey




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Aruba's first authentic Mexican Restaurant to open at Hyatt Regency Aruba



PALM BEACH, ARUBA – Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Casino & Spa (www.aruba.hyatt.com) announced today that it will open Mexicado, Aruba's first authentic Mexican restaurant, on December 20, 2012. The family-friendly restaurant will be the first for the island and also the first for the Hyatt brand. It will feature traditional and contemporary Mexican cuisine alongside a dedicated tequila selection. In continuation of the resort's multi-million dollar renovations, it will also unveil the refurbished Ruinas del Mar, its signature restaurant, this month; among other improvements.

"We are incredibly excited to offer the island its very first quintessential Mexican restaurant as this is a milestone not only for Aruba, but also for Hyatt," said Fred Hoffmann, General Manager. "2012 also marked a year of

improvements at the resort, from the new spa to upgraded amenities. We are proud of the result and will continuously strive to offer our guests the best possible experience."

Designed by The Johnson Studio, Mexicado and the renovated Ruinas Del Mar restaurant will provide guests with two dynamic dining experiences. As they descend into the 5,000 square-foot fresh water lagoon area, diners are greeted by an inviting lounge situated on a floating deck over the existing pool. Adjoining the lounge is Mexicado with its glowing bar, extensive tequila selection and sparkling shot glass chandelier.

Ruinas del Mar, one of the most romantic restaurants on the island, sits nearby. It's surrounded by lush landscaping, waterfalls and a pond filled with Koi fish and black swans. Built out of Calichi

limestone from the island's coast, this casually elegant restaurant allows guests to surround themselves in Aruba's gold mining past.

Continuing the theme, the

ZoiA Spa uses all-natural treatments with native ingredients, hand-pressed oils and home-grown herbs based on four key Caribbean elements

– sun, sand, sea and love – and the colors of the Aruban flag – yellow, white, blue, and red.

Continue on pg 5



Ruinas del Mar, "Ruins by the Sea"

is Hyatt Regency Aruba's signature restaurant offering contemporary cuisine in an open-air environment. Guests are invited to enjoy menu items such as fresh seafood and steaks, hearth oven specialties, and a display of multiple food stations offered during breakfast, Sunday brunch, and special events.

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Aruba's first authentic Mexican Restaurant... Continued from pg 4

The 5,200 square-foot ZoiA Spa – meaning balance or poise in Papiamentu – opened in mid-February. It houses eight treatment rooms, many of which offer an indoor/outdoor experience, and also, as an overall theme. Aloe Aruba, the island's only producer of aloe products, is exclusively distributed as a signature amenity line at the resort.

The multi-level pool complex also saw a makeover at its bar. The popular swim-up Balashi Pool Bar now features new bar tops and rock work, among its various upgrades. The 8,000 square-foot, three-level pool is part of a complex that includes a three-story water slide, two whirlpools and tropical gardens.

Extending the natural look, the hotel's Shoco Market Café now incorporates sustainable woods and finishes into its design. The concept by Los Angeles-based firm Indidesign, transforms the space from a coffee and ice cream shop into a full-service market with "made to order" offerings, artisanal sweets, local finds and other brands.

Guests looking for a more hands-on experience will revel in the Hyatt Regency Casino with the new Ticket In, Ticket Out (TiTo) system. This new coinless program allows guests to print tickets that can be redeemed for cash or inserted for play in other games. In addition, the resort added 42 new slot machines to the casino floor, bringing the total number to 249.

For more information about Hyatt Regency Aruba call 1-800-55-HYATT or visit www.aruba.hyatt.com.

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PAAZ says thank you to Fishes and More Restaurant



Recently, PAAZ Department (psychiatric ward) of the Hospital received a wonderful Christmas Dinner from Fishes and More Restaurant.

All patients remaining in PAAZ during the holidays and employees could enjoy the delicious meal prepared by Fishes and More.

The ambience was great, as everyone had a great time with each other.

PAAZ wishes to thank Fishes and More Restaurant for the beautiful gesture and also wish Aruba a wonderful New Year.



Syria jihadists eye post-Assad Islamic rule

BEIRUT (AFP) - Jihadist rule must spread over Syria after the ouster of Bashar al-Assad, the head of the hard-line rebel Al-Nusra Front said on Friday, accusing Washington of seeking to keep the president in power.

Al-Nusra, blacklisted by Washington as a terror outfit, has claimed responsibility for the majority of deadly suicide bombings in Syria's 21-month conflict.

Its fighters, many of whom are foreigners, have also played a major part in battlefield gains made by the rebels in the northwest in recent months.

In an audio tape posted online on Friday the head of the group, Abu Mohammed Al-Jawlani, said clearly -- and repeatedly -- that Islamists must rule in post-Assad Syria.

"The fall of the regime will leave a vacuum and you are the best placed to fill that void," Jawlani said, addressing his fighters.

Power must go to the "mujahadeen", he said.

In his message, entitled "People of Syria, we sacrifice

our souls for you," Jawlani told Syrians: "We have offered you our blood in defending your religion and your lands, and will continue to sacrifice ourselves one after the other."

"We will continue to make sacrifices so that the Syrian people can recover their pride and well-being that have been taken from them, until they can live under the banner (of Islam)... ruled by shura (principles of Islam)," he added.

Jawlani insisted that those who shed their blood in the fight against the regime of Assad, who hails from the minority Alawite community, an offshoot of Shiite Islam, must reap the rewards without foreign intervention.

"This blood which was shed to emerge from oppression... should not be lost in the darkness of the West. He who sows must harvest the fruits," he said.

Jawlani lashed out at the international community, particularly the United States, accused it of seeking to keep Assad in power.

Indian gang-rape victim dies in Singapore: hospital

SINGAPORE (AFP) - An Indian gang-rape victim died Saturday in Singapore after suffering from severe organ failure, the hospital treating her said.

"We are very sad to report that the patient passed away peacefully at 4.45 am (local time) on 29 Dec 2012," Kelvin Loh, the chief executive of Mount Elizabeth Hospital, said in a statement.

"Her family and officials from the High Commission of India were by her side. The Mount Elizabeth Hospital team of doctors, nurses and staff join her family in mourning her loss."

Home Minister Shinde said Delhi police would soon launch a drive to recruit more female officers as a confidence-building measure.

"Every police station should have women police personnel," the minister said. The Indian state of West Bengal, which is run by a woman chief minister, on Friday promised 65 all-female police stations.

The Delhi gang-rape has shone the spotlight on a crime that occurs on a daily basis in India, with most such assaults taking place in rural areas.



Traders toast one another with champagne on the last day of trading for 2012 at the Frankfurt Stock Exchange on December 28, 2012 in Frankfurt, Germany. The DAX index of Germany's largest corporations finished the year at over 7,500, which represents a strong increase for the year. At the same time one year ago the index stood at just under 6,000.

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Italy's Monti to lead centrist coalition in February polls

ROME (AFP) - Italy's caretaker Prime Minister Mario Monti said Friday that he will contest February elections at the head of a centrist coalition, driving a wedge between centre-left and centre-right parties.

"I agree to assume the role of head of the coalition, and I will commit myself to guaranteeing the success of this operation," Monti said after meeting for four hours with representatives of centrist groups and civic organisations.

Monti, 69, announced a week ago that he would step down after 13 months at the head of an unelected team of technocrats that was appointed to steer Italy out of a financial crisis that could have had dire consequences for the entire 17-nation eurozone.

Technically, as an Italian senator for life, the former European commissioner cannot himself run for office, but is in a position to be renamed prime minister if a party or coalition he supports wins the vote on February 24-25.

Monti is seen as a way of preventing scandal-tainted former premier Silvio Berlusconi from returning to power and undoing hard-won reforms.

In a Senate hall -- and not at the seat of government -- Monti said Friday he was "not creating a new party" but an alliance to have various groups that already back his programme "To Change Italy, To Reform Europe" work together.

Ahead of the February election groups backing Monti in the Senate will form a single list named "Monti Agenda for Italy", he said.

In the lower-house Chamber of Deputies several lists will have to group together.

Monti said he would check electoral lists closely to

exclude would-be candidates who have had issues with the courts.

The "Monti Agenda" proposes to cut public funds for political parties and parliamentary groups, and also includes measures to make more room for women and environmental issues.

Monti could bar the route for Berlusconi, who is running for the premiership for the sixth time in 18 years, but who is now isolated on the right side of the political spectrum with support from anti-tax and anti-euro factions.



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International News

Russia urges Assad to talk to opposition

MOSCOW (AFP) - Russia, the only world power with close ties to the Syrian regime, urged President Bashar al-Assad on Friday to talk to the opposition as Moscow itself put out feelers that received a cold reception from the rebels.

The new pressure on Assad came as Moscow revved up its bid to save a tattered peace process by first hosting a top Damascus envoy and then planning for a meeting today with Syria peace mediator Lakhdar Brahimi.

Russia also invited the head of the opposition National Coalition for talks in either Moscow or a regional capital - the Kremlin's first contact with a group formed in November and recognised by the West as the sole legitimate representative of Syrians.

But Moscow still views Assad as the legitimate leader, and its outreach to the regime's opponents received a cool response from National Coalition chief Ahmed Moaz

al-Khatib who rejected the invitation to Moscow, accusing Russia of interference.

The fast-paced but tricky diplomacy came as rebels pounded the Wadi Deif army base, one of the government's dwindling number of outposts in the northwest, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Rebels on the ground said the jihadist Al-Nusra Front, blacklisted by Washington as a terror outfit, was leading the offensive.

The West lacks direct access to Assad and needs Russia to convince him that his regime's days are numbered and that he cannot hang on to power through force alone.

In recent weeks, Moscow appears to have distanced itself from the rulers of what was its last big ally in the Middle East. President Vladimir Putin has twice this month said that Moscow has no intention of propping up Assad.

Murders hit new record in Venezuela: NGO

CARACAS (AFP) - Venezuela, already the most violent country in South America, recorded a new high of almost 21,000 murders in 2012, a non-governmental organization that monitors crime here said Thursday.

"We can conservatively estimate that 2012 will end with 21,692 deceased victims of violence, a rate of 73 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants," the Venezuelan Violence Observatory said in its annual report.

"During 2012 there was a widespread increase of violence in Venezuela... despite the various measures taken by the government," the group said.

Venezuela was already considered the most violent country in South America, with 50 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants last year, a total of 14,092 murders, according to official government figures in 2011.

The Observatory, which put

the 2011 figure at 19,336 -- a rate of 67 murders per 100,000 inhabitants -- said 2012 had seen another 12 percent rise. No officials figures have been published yet for this year.

Unlike other Latin American countries, Venezuela is not in the throes of a drug war or battling guerrillas.

Between nine and 15 million legal and illegal weapons were in circulation in a country of almost 29 million people, according to official figures from 2009.

President Hugo Chavez has admitted Venezuela has a "serious" crime problem. The government created a national police force in 2009 and last year it launched special security operations and a disarmament program.

Maduro issued his first decree on Thursday, extending a job security measure to all workers.

US teachers take up arms to prevent mass shootings

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Several US states are considering allowing school teachers to carry weapons, and educators, determined not to allow a repeat of the Newtown massacre, are flocking to training sessions.

As gun control advocates try to outlaw military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, gun enthusiasts, backed by the powerful National Rifle Association (NRA), are taking a very different approach.

The gun lobby argues that there is no way to stop crazy or evil people doing bad things and so the only sure-fire way

to prevent mass shootings like the one at Sandy Hook elementary is to take down the shooter.

In a rare press conference one week after 20-year-old Adam Lanza shot dead 20 six- and seven-year-olds and six adults with a Bushmaster AR-15 assault rifle, the NRA called for armed guards in every school in the country.

But in Utah, one of the handful of American states that currently allows people to carry licensed concealed weapons into public schools, many teachers are unwilling to wait and see which political argument wins out.

In response to Newtown, the Utah Shooting Sports Council (USSC) waived its fee on Thursday for educators wanting to participate in training sessions to gain permits to carry concealed weapons.

More than half of the roughly 400 education professionals that showed an interest had to be turned away because there wasn't enough room on the course.

While teachers train themselves to try to stop the next Lanza, state officials like Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne are busily crafting legislation to make sure they can legally do so.

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Health & Living

Madonna builds ten schools in Malawi

BLANTYRE, Malawi (AFP) - Former Material Girl Madonna has built 10 primary schools in Malawi this year, her charity announced Friday.

Two years after abandoning a \$15 million girls academy, the pop diva said projects this year would educate 4,871 children in the tiny southern African country.

The projects were carried out by her charity Raising Malawi and the global non-profit buildOn.

"The fact that more than 4,800 children in Malawi will get to go to school next year is a tremendous step forward for their individual growth and the growth of Malawi," Madonna said.

The schools, which had been scheduled to be built over 18 months, were completed six months ahead of schedule.

The charity said six of the schools are already in use and all 10 would be up and running in January 2013 for the first day of school in the New Year.

Madonna is no stranger to Malawi.

In 2006 she adopted toddler David Banda under controversial circumstances and two years later adopted another child, Mercy James.

Her charity, Raising Malawi, has poured millions of dollars in support of orphanages and a network of orphan care service providers.

Malawi is ranked by the UN Human Development Index as one of the world's 20 least developed countries and 39 percent of its 13 million citizens live below the poverty line, on less than a dollar a day.

Same-sex marriage and adoption factfile

PARIS (AFP) - As French government ministers prepare to approve a draft law on gay marriage and adoption, below is a breakdown of similar legislation around the world:

- **NETHERLANDS:** On April 1, 2001, Holland became the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage. Includes the right to adoption.

- **BELGIUM:** Homosexual couples in Belgium won the right to marry in June 2003 and in April 2006 parliament voted into law a bill allowing homosexual couples to adopt children.

- **SPAIN:** In July 2005, Spain became the third European Union state to pass a law allowing same-sex marriages. Gay couples can adopt children.

- **CANADA:** The law allowing gay couples to marry and adopt children came into force in July 2005.

- **SOUTH AFRICA:** In November 2006 became the first African country to legalise same-sex marriage. Gay couples can also adopt.

- **NORWAY:** A January 2009 law allowed homosexuals to marry and adopt children and permitted lesbians to be artificially inseminated.

- **SWEDEN:** Sweden's homosexuals have been allowed to wed in religious or civil ceremonies since May 2009. Gay couples have been able to adopt since 2002.

- **PORTUGAL:** Under a June 1, 2010 law Portugal legalised gay marriage, while excluding the right to adoption.

- **ICELAND:** In June 2010 a new law legalising homosexual marriages came into force. Adoption has been possible since 2006.

- **ARGENTINA:** On July 15, 2010 a bill that legalizes same-sex marriage came into force -- a Latin American first. Homosexual couples

can adopt children.

Two countries allow gay marriage on part of their territory: the United States, in the states of Iowa, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York and the capital Washington DC; and Mexico in the federal capital.

Other countries have adopted legislation on civil partnerships, notably Denmark (1989), France (1999), Germany (2001), Finland (2002), New Zealand (2004), Britain (2005), the Czech Republic (2006), Switzerland (2007), Uruguay, Colombia and Ireland (2011).



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Sci-Tech

Mobile Internet forcing computers to evolve - Focus

- The shift to smartphones and tablets became a landslide this year, crushing desire for laptop computers and pressuring manufacturers to adapt to the mobile Internet era.

The trend promised to gain momentum in 2013, with people using handheld gadgets to remain connected to the Web on the go and switching to sophisticated systems in homes or offices.

"Tablets will not kill PCs (personal computers)," Forrester Research analyst Frank Gillett told AFP. "Tablets will force them to evolve."

Signs that the evolution is underway include Microsoft overhauling Windows to synch the world's most widely used computer operating system with tablets and smartphones as well as desktops and laptops.

Microsoft is even selling its own Surface tablet based on the Windows 8 software released in October.

"I don't think the PC is going away," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group in Silicon Valley.

"What is clear is we are going through some turmoil; the market is resetting itself around new products."

While people opt for tablets instead of laptops for computing on the move, they will yearn for bigger screens and more processing power when they settle down for "real work," according to analysts.

"Your tablet can do so much that fewer people need laptops, but when you get to your desktop you want something that contrasts significantly from your tablet," Gillett said. "I think we will ultimately see the reinvention of PCs."

Gillett described a future in which people go seamlessly from working on mobile devices to desktop stations where tablets can be docked and augmented with sensors, processors, bigger screens and more. He refers to the concept as "frames" for computing.

The analyst contends that the limping economy is among factors behind a temporary lull in PC purchases destined to end as people "go through this illusion they will do it all on a tablet and realize they can't."

"Tablets will substitute for some, even many, laptops but because a tablet can't do as much as a laptop it will even-



tually stimulate PC sales," Gillett reasoned.

"What ultimately happens here is that the laptop and desktop get rethought and reinvented for a tablet world."

The market for tablets and smartphones is red-hot, leaving the PC as an afterthought for many. Microsoft, which was the biggest tech firm in 2009 because of its dominant Windows operating system for PCs, has fallen behind Apple and is struggling to remain a major force amid gains by Google and Amazon.

Onetime giants like Hewlett-Packard and Dell are struggling amid sluggish demand as sales of tablet com-

puters and other devices surge.

However, Enderle pointed out, China-based Lenovo is thriving by selling the gamut of computing devices.

"Lenovo is showing success in all categories, supporting the notion that while the market has more products it is all still personal computing," Enderle said.

Research firm IDC projects global PC sales this year of 367 million, up just a fraction of a percent from 2011 and marking the second consecutive year of growth below two percent. ABI Research predicts tablet computers will overtake notebook PCs by 2016.

Roger Kay of Endpoint Technologies Associates said that the PC "still is pretty relevant" but "not the center of the computing universe."

"I think people are going to choose a pantheon of devices, and all of these are connected through the cloud... so the user is now the center of the tech universe."

More than 32 million tablets were shipped worldwide in the third quarter of 2012, a 75 percent increase from the same period a year earlier, according to Futuresource Consulting.

Futuresource projected that global tablet shipments this year would hit 137 million units and nearly triple during the coming five years.

"We're seeing significant industry growth across all key world territories, with the majority of tablet market activity still originating from consumer purchases," said Simon Bryant of Futuresource.

Part of the success of tablets was attributed to the average price dropping below \$400, due in large part to competition between device makers using free Android operating software from Google.

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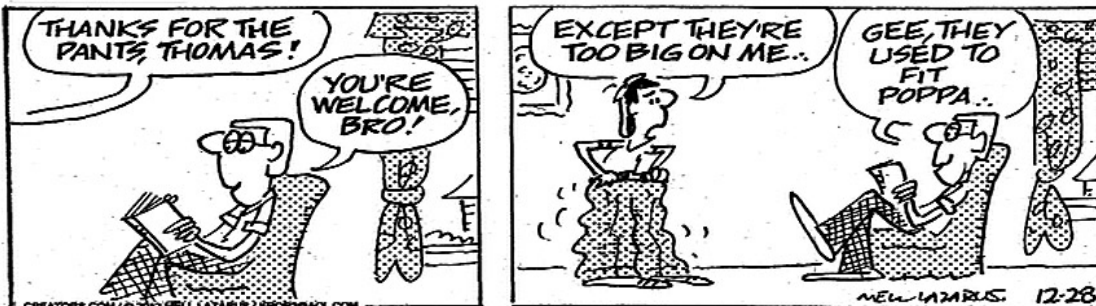
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COMICS

PICKLES



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NOT QUITE UP

ACROSS

1. Measles symptom
5. Music or painting
8. Holliday et al.
12. Depended
14. ___ Bingle (Crosby's nickname)
15. Algerian seaport
16. Slowly, to Mehta
17. Roman 551
18. Artifice
19. In the current's direction
21. Certain Chevy
22. Itsy-bitsy
23. Lost color
24. Happy
28. Tie recipient in June
29. Volcanic

formations

30. Not by any means
32. Type of milk
34. Oblivious
36. Sondheim's "___ Woods"
40. ___ oxide
42. Hard fats
43. Greek island
45. Honorary degree: abbr.
47. Actress Harper
48. Domains
49. Absconds
51. Plays the horses
52. The servants, on a PBS series
57. Prepare copy
58. Cosell's favorite boxer
59. German ruler, before 1918

60. Plug part

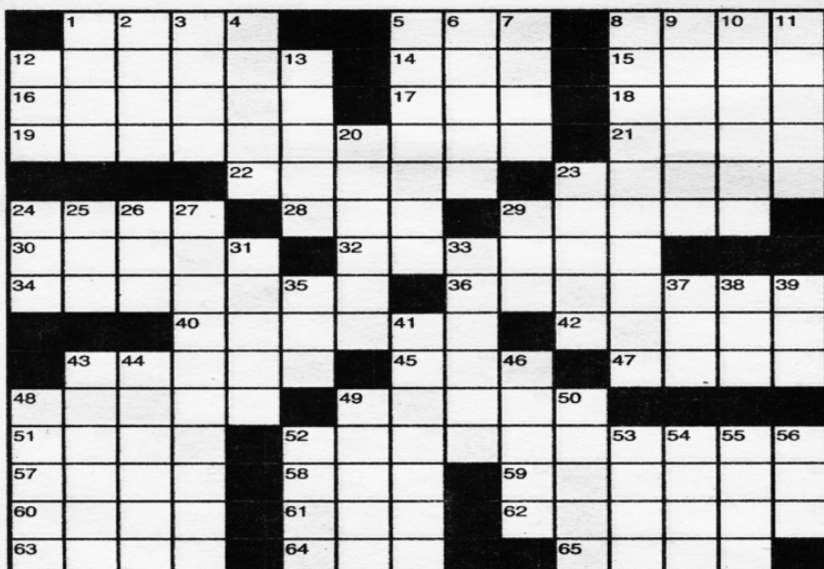
61. Minute measure
62. Moves surreptitiously
63. Black hole, once
64. Candidate, for short
65. Inattentive

DOWN

1. Change the decor
2. "All things by ___ divine" (Shelley)
3. Aries or Leo, e.g.
4. Caper
5. Contract supplements
6. Convey
7. Flab-free
8. Impoverished

9. American League member

10. Dairy babies
11. J.C. of golf
12. "Outstanding!", in the '90s
13. Was overly fond of
20. Hole enlarger
23. Wilbur and Nash, e.g.
24. Oxlike antelope
25. Chaney of horror films
26. "Just as I suspected!"
27. Maine native
29. Packing box: abbr.
31. Tom of "Mystery Men"
33. Rock growth
35. Itinerary abbr.
37. Driving mound
38. Altitudes: abbr.
39. Curvaceous member of the alphabet
41. Spite
43. Charge account
44. Acne medicine
46. Work tables
48. Is an accomplice
49. Book page
50. Prim
52. Clammy
53. Radar, to Col. Potter
54. ___ de Pinos, Cuba
55. Snorkeling spot
56. Grads-to-be: abbr.



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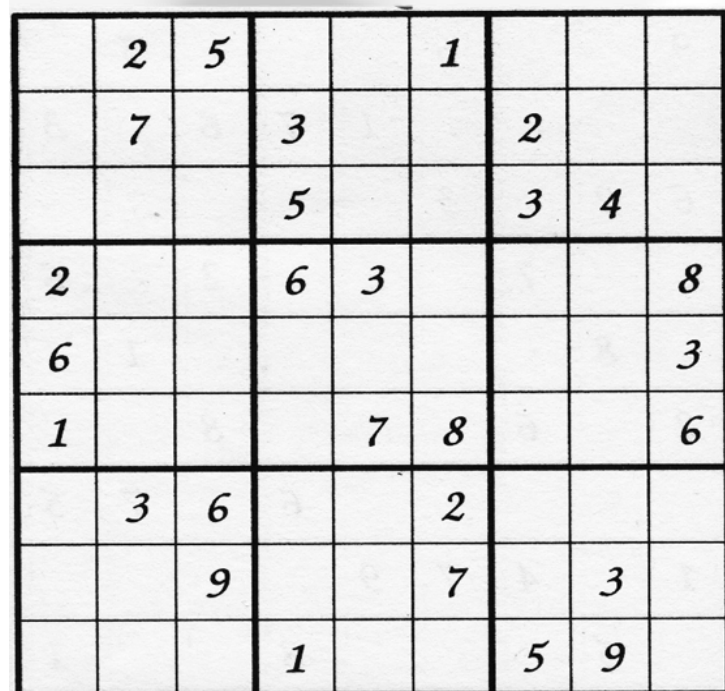
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2	8	9	1	5	3	6	4	7
1	3	4	2	6	7	9	5	8
9	2	7	8	1	6	5	3	4
8	5	1	4	3	9	7	2	6
4	7	9	6	2	5	1	8	3
5	1	2	9	8	7	4	6	3
6	9	8	1	7	4	5	2	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.

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Mainstreet Downtown Aruba

Finance

Tighter EU rules on budgets, deficits in force Jan 1

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The EU's 'fiscal compact,' a hard-won step towards tighter economic coordination agreed as part of efforts to tame the debilitating debt crisis, comes into effect yesterday.

Finalised in March, 25 of the 27 EU member states accepted a 'balanced budget rule' in the compact to ensure that governments would no longer run the massive budget deficits which drove the debt crisis and nearly sank the euro.

The Fiscal Stability Treaty also laid down penalties for those who breached the rules to limit deficits and debt, providing for a degree of central EU oversight to keep miscreants in line.

Notably, the balanced budget provision has to be written into national law, and preferably, enshrined in the na-

tional constitution, to make it very hard to change or get around in future.

British Prime Minister David Cameron famously refused to sign up to what London saw as a further encroachment by Brussels on a key national right to set taxation and spending priorities. He was joined by a sceptical Czech Republic.

The treaty required ratification by 12 eurozone member states and with Finland doing so last week, it will now come into force on January 1, the EU said in a statement.

The treaty "is a key element in the overall positive balance sheet for the year ... but it is important that other measures follow," he said, referring to other steps recently agreed to more closely integrate the eurozone.

Facebook stocks lower as Instagram loses users

NEW YORK (AFP) - Facebook shares fell Friday after a report said its photo-sharing app Instagram had lost millions of users following the release of planned policy changes since dropped on an outcry from users.

According to audience tracker AppData.com, over the past week the number of daily Instagram users fell by 3.5 million to an average of 12.4 million users per day.

Facebook shares sank about 2.5 percent lower in early trade, before rebounding to \$25.71 in the early afternoon, off 1.2 percent.

Earlier this month, Instagram backed off planned policy changes that appeared to

clear the way for the mobile photo sharing service to sell pictures without compensation, amid protests from users.

Changes to the privacy policy and terms of service had included wording that appeared to allow people's pictures to be used by advertisers at Instagram or Facebook worldwide, royalty-free.

Twitter and Instagram forums buzzed over the phrasing, as users debated whether to delete their accounts before the new rules kicked in.

Facebook acquired Instagram earlier this year. The original price was pegged at \$1 billion but the final value was less because of a decline in the social network's share price.

Obama, top lawmakers meet on cliff edge



WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama Friday sought a late deal to stop the US economy tumbling off a "fiscal cliff" next week, gathering top congressional leaders for crunch White House talks.

Obama is trying to broker a deal to avert huge tax increases and spending cuts due to come into force as the year turns on Tuesday, as dysfunctional Washington reluctantly works through a disrupted holiday period.

A sense of building crisis was exacerbated by sliding stock prices on Wall Street as the political stalemate threatened a set off chain reactions that could drive America back into recession and rattle the global economy.

Obama met top Republicans, House Speaker John Boehner and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, and top Democrats, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, in the Oval Office.

But with time so short, the last-ditch talks to head off a \$500 billion fiscal time bomb due to detonate on January 1 appeared unlikely to forge a permanent solution on a long-term deficit reduction deal.

Instead, Obama, now banking on a stopgap solution after talks on a grand debt and tax bargain with Boehner failed, wants taxes on American families earning more than \$250,000 a year to go up but to spare the middle class.

Obama will not make a new

offer to Republicans, a source familiar with the meeting said, adding that the president would ask for an extension of expiring unemployment insurance for two million people.

He will also tell Republicans that if they cannot come up with a counter-proposal to avert the fiscal cliff they must allow his plan to come up for a vote in both chambers of Congress, the source said.

Such a scenario would leave Republicans in a tough political spot as if they refuse, it would be easy for the White House to blame them for the economy toppling over the cliff.

It is not clear whether the Obama plan would avert massive spending cuts due to come into force on January 1, and does not deal with his request to raise the \$16 trillion ceiling on government borrowing.

Republicans want to extend George W. Bush-era tax cuts due to expire on Tuesday for everyone and accuse the president of failing to offer meaningful spending cuts in a bargain in return for them agreeing to raise revenues.

Some top lawmakers clung to hope.

But Republican Senator Bob Corker complained Obama and Democrats in Congress had balked at cutting spending on key social programs weighing on the budget, and inflating the deficit, accusing them of a "total dereliction of duty."

Obama broke off his vacation in Hawaii in search of a

last-minute deal and Boehner called the House back to work on Sunday.

The president's scaled-down solution calls for an extension of tax cuts for people earning less than \$250,000, and an extension of unemployment benefits before a wider effort to trim the deficit next year.

But it is doubtful the package could pass the House as restive conservatives last week rebuked Boehner by rejecting his fallback plan which would have raised taxes on people earning \$1 million.

While each side must for the sake of appearances be seen to be seeking a deal, the easiest way out of the mess might be to allow the economy to go over the cliff, but to fix the problem in the first few days of next year.

In that scenario, Republicans, who are philosophically opposed to raising taxes, could back a bill to lower the newly raised rates on almost all Americans, thus sidestepping the stigma of raising taxes.

Recent polls show a majority of Americans back Obama's handling of the crisis, and would blame Republicans for a failure to fix it, so the president could get a short-term political boost from an early deal next year.

Should the stalemate linger however, the crisis would cloud the early months of Obama's second term, would dent his popularity and could detract from his key political goals like immigration reform and gun control.

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

-- Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by



the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community

of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facili-

ties such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the

least is the future value of the investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

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Eat like a local at The Queen's restaurant at Palm Beach Plaza



Varella, Luisa and the next generation of chef



Grandma's classic Stew beef with Rice and Potato salad

--An elegant décor with a breezy terrace overlooking Palm Beach welcomes guests to Varella Innocencia's very popular restaurant showcasing authentic local cuisine:

The Queen's.

They may have moved from Oranjestad to hipper new digs in Palm Beach Plaza, but the food and prices are strictly native, which is what first won this charming eatery their loyal clientele. Varella's mom, Luisa, is still in the kitchen, conjuring up the delicious dishes that have been in her family for generations, acknowledged on the menu with items such as "Carni Stoba di Mamachi"--"Grandma's Beef Stew," and their Arawak Steak, along with local delicacies like Keshi Yena -"Full Cheese." This is a tasty, filling stew of chicken, with other ingredients that are handy that day, all incased in a thick skin of melted Gouda. It was very satisfying and particularly memorable paired with The Queen's garlic bread and very special Pica, a mix of chopped onions and the famous local hot pepper, Madame Janette. Not overly spicy, it lends that perfect bit of tang to this deliciously picturesque meal.

One of the distinctions of Aruban cuisine is incorporating unique indigenous ingredients such as in Wild Cucumber Stew and a particular light fish chowder accompanied by the local specialties pan bati (corn meal pancake) and funchi (the local version of polenta.)

Seafood main courses for Catch of the Day Aruban Style to shrimp and a mixed seafood platter with shrimp, fish, squid, scallops and mussels. Meat dishes such as BBQ Chicken and Ribs or Grilled Tenderloin, each including a choice of 2 side dishes; all quite yummy and bargain-priced to boot!

The Queen's is located on the second level of Palm Beach Plaza, tucked into a cozy corner at the front of the mall. If you have a mind to try the real deal in Aruban food, without a doubt, this is the way to truly eat like a local. They are open from 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM, daily, offering indoor and outdoor dining. Aside from an extensive menu they also have daily specials made from whatever is in season and Mama Luisa is in the mood to prepare, so don't forget to ask about what isn't on the menu!

Buster's is back in Eagle Beach at Trop Casino



The home of the Beer Pong drinking game

--Fans of Aruba's favorite sports bar are happy to hear that Buster's Garage has relocated to the restaurant/bar space inside Trop Casino. Now Eagle Beach resort guests have a great place for a bargain-priced breakfast or a bucket of beer while rooting for the team of their choice.

Buster's has that great, homey feel of settling in to enjoy a game with buddies, greatly due to the warmth and enthusiasm of owner Rusty. He takes pride in making patrons feel welcome. "If somebody really needs to watch their home team on the field, we'll be happy to put it on for them," he confidently assured us.

"We have 3 satellite dishes with separate pack-

ages to pick up every station imaginable. If there is a game going on out there somewhere, we'll find it."

With giant screens everywhere throughout the joint, there isn't a bad seat in the

house. Aside from their all day menu of game-watching favorites, they also feature a hearty breakfast menu. The "Grand Slam Platter" includes eggs any style, pancakes or waffles, bacon, juice, fresh made home fries with coffee or tea for only \$9. Lunch and dinner menus reflect the same moderate pricing with required sports bar standards such as chicken wings, club sandwiches, burgers and a heaping helping of nachos, averaging \$9;



A whopping cheese nachos w/chicken dish

pizza and main courses range from \$11 to \$15.

Aside from the games and the gambling, patrons can expect great entertainment three nights weekly with one of Aruba's most popular trios, "Threesome." There are also some wild times getting acquainted with Rusty's Beer Pong, the Drinking Game of Champions. Win or lose, players always end up with a smile on their face.

This family friendly place, with air hockey and video games for the kids, along with a special menu for young ones, is open 7 days a week from 7:30 AM until 1:00 AM for late night snacking and fun.



Threesome, takes care of the entertainment



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TE: 586 4046**SPORTS** **NFL: Cowboys, Redskins battle for division crown**

Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Dez Bryant (88) and fullback Lawrence Vickers celebrate Bryant's touchdown against the New Orleans Saints in the first half of their NFL football game in Arlington, Texas Sunday.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The battle for the NFL's NFC East division crown will come down to the wire on Sunday when the Washington Redskins host the Dallas Cowboys in the last game of the regular season.

For the Cowboys, winning is their only ticket into the playoffs, while the Redskins might advance as a wildcard even if they lose.

But Washington's sensational rookie quarterback Robert Griffin III doesn't want to do it that way, and the Cowboys know it.

Dallas defenders are focused on containing the versatile young star -- something they failed to do in a 38-31 loss to Washington on Thanksgiving Day last month.

"I think one thing you have to do with him, especially when you have an option quarterback who's exposed: You have to inflict him with pain," said Dallas linebacker Brady Poppinga.

Since the teams last met, Griffin has been sidelined by a knee injury, and may be less than 100 percent.

Nevertheless, Dallas line-

backer Ernie Sims said the Cowboys are preparing for Griffin's best.

"Stopping RGIII, that's our goal," Sims said.

Offensively the Cowboys will be relying on quarterback Tony Romo and receiver Dez Bryant to continue the kind of inspired play that has seen the team claw back into playoff contention after falling two games below .500 midway through the season.

Romo must avoid the inopportune interceptions that led to defeats against Chicago and the New York Giants -- something he has managed to do late in the season.

"He makes a ton of plays," Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said. "He's just not making very many bad plays. He's done a great job with the football. His decision-making, his care of the football has been very good."

The Minnesota Vikings can lock up one of two remaining playoff berths with a victory over visiting Green Bay.

The Packers, meanwhile, will be trying to secure a first-round bye and prevent Vikings running back Adrian

Peterson from capping his remarkable comeback from a torn knee ligament by surpassing Eric Dickerson's NFL record of 2,105 rushing yards in a season.

Peterson needs 208 yards to break the mark set in 1984.

"I respect Adrian Peterson a lot," said Packers cornerback Sam Shields. "He's a great running back. But he's a big threat. We need to stop him."

If the Vikings lose, it could open the door for the erratic Chicago Bears, who visit Detroit, and maybe even for the New York Giants, who maintained the slimmest of playoff hopes heading into their season finale at home to a Philadelphia Eagles team that will have Michael Vick

back as starting quarterback -- taking the reins back from Nick Foles for what is likely his last game as an Eagle.

AFC South division winners Houston will try to lock up home field advantage and a first-round bye when they visit Indianapolis.

The playoff-bound Colts will be welcoming back coach Chuck Pagano, after he took time off to be treated for leukemia.

The Colts are locked into the fifth seed in the AFC. Baltimore, assured of the sixth seed, take on playoff-bound Cincinnati.

Seattle secured a playoff berth with a win over San Francisco last week. Now they'll try to claim the NFC

West Crown over the 49ers with a win over St. Louis, while San Francisco, also assured of a playoff berth, host Arizona.

Perennial post-season contenders New England, still in the running for a first-round bye, host Miami, and Denver -- also in the hunt for a bye -- host lowly Kansas City.

Atlanta, already assured of home field advantage in the playoffs, wrap up their regular season against struggling Tampa Bay.

In other games, Buffalo host the New York Jets, New Orleans host Carolina, Pittsburgh host Cleveland, Tennessee host Jacksonville and San Diego are at home to Oakland.

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Patrick Sydow comes in second at the Florida International Tennis Championship



-- Local tennis in Aruba got a boost over the weekend as our very own Patrick Sydow

placed second in the Junior Orange Bowl International Tennis Championship at Coral Gables, Florida, for his age group. He was beaten by winner Ishay Oliel, from Israel, 6-3, 6-1, who took the trophy, followed by a phone call from Israel's prime minister, congratulating him on his spectac-

proud dad reports that the Junior Orange Bowl International Championship known since 2008 as the Dunlop Orange Bowl International Tennis Championships is a prestigious junior tennis tournament, one of only five that are rated by the International Tennis Federation as Grade A.

Key Biscayne, Florida, attracting over 1,000 entrants from more than 75 countries.

"We are very proud of Patrick's international achievement," says Frans Sydow, "he worked very hard, and we as parents worked very hard alongside him, to support him, and allow him to develop his gifts. We hope that with his success the public schools in Aruba as well as the government will undertake the development of these talented kids, to help this country raise world-class champions, representing Aruba with pride and

competence."

Patrick Sydow is 12 years old and a student of Colegio Arubano. He was born in Aruba and has been playing tennis since the age of 4, mostly with his dad who also played tennis through college, as a professional. Patrick trains with Argentinean-born pro Claudio Martinez at the Occidental Grand Resort tennis courts.

For additional tournament info, also rules and regulations regarding registration, you may visit www.jrorange-bowl.org.



ular performance Young tennis players Oliel and Sydow join the likes of Jimmy Connors, Andy Murray, Jennifer Capriati and Monica Seles, who are all former winners of that international competition.

Frans Sydow, Patrick's

The tournament features both boys and girls singles and doubles draws at both '18 and under' (under-19) and '16 and under' (under-17) age categories. Since 1999, the tournament has been held each December at Crandon Park, in

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